

NEWS RELEASE



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San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - August 26, 2004

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that today the owner of a grocery company in Chula Vista pled guilty in San Diego before Magistrate Judge Anthony J. Battaglia to the importation of prohibited tuna. In pleading guilty to the Information, Salvador Garcia Sandoval, the owner of TBA Mexican Trade Grocery, Chula Vista, CA, acknowledged that he imported more than 1600 cases of tuna that was falsely certified as “Dolphin Safe.” As part of his plea, Sandoval agreed to pay approximately \$40,000 to the U.S. government for lost tax duties and \$1975 to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries for administrative costs.

The plea was the result of an investigation conducted by NOAA Fisheries. A local merchant had reported to the agency his suspicions that Dolores brand canned tuna was being imported into the U.S. with false dolphin-safe labeling. In 1990, Congress enacted the Dolphin Protection Consumer Information Act, which prohibits importers and sellers of tuna from falsely labeling their products “Dolphin Safe.” More than 90% of the world’s canned tuna market has pledged to buy and sell only “Dolphin Safe” tuna.

Sandoval is scheduled to appear before the Honorable M. James Lorenz for sentencing on November 15, 2004, at 8:30 a.m.

DEFENDANT

Salvador Garcia Sandoval Criminal Case No. 04cr2293

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 545 (Fraudulent Importation of Merchandise)
Penalties: 5 years' incarceration, \$250,000 fine, \$100 penalty assessment

AGENCIES

NOAA National Marine Fisheries